

For Immediate Release
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Agriculture Development Council selects Growth Through Agriculture projects
~ Next Application Deadline is January 31, 2007 ~

Helena, Mont – The Montana Agriculture Development Council has awarded \$262,310 of funding to 14 Growth Through Agriculture projects for agricultural development, according to council Chair John Franklin.

"These projects represent a diversity of approaches to growing our agricultural economy through marketing and processing products and educating consumers," said Nancy K. Peterson, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture.

The Agriculture Development Council oversees the Growth Through Agriculture program, the source of funding the council uses for project investments. The goal of the GTA program is to provide financial assistance to develop new products or innovative ideas that enhance our state's agricultural industry.

At its December meeting, the council awarded investment funds to:

- Les Hirsch Ranch, Miles City, \$30,000 return-on-investment loan toward the purchase of alfalfa cubing equipment.
- Montana Hog Marketing Association, Malta, \$4,550 grant to host a pork production performance educational event.
- Great Northern Growers Cooperative, Sunburst, \$49,500 return-on-investment deferred loan toward the purchase of food grade processing equipment for producing PrOatina brand oats.
- Glasgow Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, Glasgow, \$5,310 grant to host a one-day seminar addressing global agriculture production and diversification.
- Bitter Root Brewing, Hamilton, \$15,725 grant for marketing a product promoting Montana grown and malted barley.
- City of Great Falls, Great Falls, \$9,850 grant for promotion of the Made in Montana Marketplace annual show.

-- J & Z Enterprises dba UnderGrade.com, Missoula, \$10,000 grant for advertising and promotion of Montana agricultural products.

-- Ethanol Producers and Consumers, Nashua, \$9,000 grant toward supplies and materials expenditures for a bio-fuel educational campaign.

-- Gallatin Valley Agriculture Committee, Belgrade, \$5,000 grant to host "Farm Fair" 2007, a hands-on educational tour for Gallatin County area 4th graders to learn about agriculture.

-- Agri-Green Biodiesel, LLC, Fernie, B.C., Canada, \$35,000 return-on-investment deferred loan toward the purchase of biodiesel equipment to relocate to Kalispell.

-- Richland County Conservation District, Sidney, \$17,875 grant for drilling and well development to provide irrigation water.

-- Trevino's Tortillas, Billings, \$10,000 return-on-investment deferred loan for equipment upgrades to expand production using Montana grown and milled wheat; and \$20,000 grant for packaging supplies and materials.

-- MSU Extension Service, Chinook, \$15,500 grant for wool harvesting training and program development.

-- Gold Country Mushroom, Inc., Clancy, \$13,060 return-on-investment deferred loan for equipment upgrades; and \$11,940 grant for facility upgrades.

Montana agricultural producers and industry representatives serve on the Agriculture Development Council. Council members are: John Franklin of Sidney, chair; David Tyler of Belgrade, vice-chair; Ervin Schlemmer of Joliet; Patricia Quisno of Harlem; Bill Koenig of Kalispell; Nancy K. Peterson, Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture; and Tony Preite, Director of the Montana Department of Commerce.

The next deadline for project applications to the Growth Through Agriculture program is January 31, 2006. The council plans to review the next round of project applications in early March.

For more information and application materials, contact Justin Hager, Growth Through Agriculture program manager, at the Montana Department of Agriculture, at (406) 444-2402 or by e-mail at agr@mt.gov.

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